

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CANBER 04772 280839Z

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-15 INR-10 PRS-01 RSR-01 RSC-01 /043 W

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R 280746Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1571

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4772

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

FOR EA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SNEIDER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AS, US

SUBJECT: WHITLAM COMMENTS IN MELBOURNE HERALD

1. I DO NOT KNOW HOW UPI PLAYED STORY, BUT CRITICAL
PASSAGE OF COSTIGAN ARTICLE, FROM SAN CLEMENTE, STATES:
2. QTE HE DOES NOT SEEM TO TRUST THE PEOPLE, UNQTE MR.
WHITLAM TOLD ME AFTER HIS WHITE HOUSE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NIXON.
3. QTE AND HE DOES NOT TRUST ANYONE ELSE TO ARRANGE THE AFFAIRS
OF THE WORLD. UNQTE
4. QTE OBVIOUSLY CONVINCED BY HIS MEETING THAT THE NIXON AND
WHITLAM POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES ARE WORLDS APART, THE PRIME
MINISTER SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS A MAN WHO WANTED TO DECIDE
THE UNTILATE QUESTIONS OF WAR AND PEACE.
5. QTE HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THAT QUESTIONS LIKE THE MAKING
OF WAR ARE NOW UP TO THE PEOPLE TO DECIDE, UNQTE MR.
WHITLAM SAID.
6. QTE THE PRIME MINISTER LEFT THE OVAL OFFICE CONVINCED THAT
RICHARD NIXON HAS A COMPLETE DISDAIN FOR PUBLIC OPINION
BOTH IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD AND WAS A MAN, DESPITE WATERGATE,
DETERMINED TO RUN THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HIS OWN IDEAS. UNQTE

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7. I PRESUME YOU WILL SOON HAVE FULL TEXT FROM AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY.

8. MICK SHANN WAS MOST UPSET OVER THIS MATTER WHEN I RAISED IT AUGUST 28. HE COMMENTED THAT THE PRIMIN IS BRIGHT, QUICK, A GO-GETTER, BUT ABSOLUTELY IRREPRESSIBLE. HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY AND HE IS LIKELY TO ALWAYS REMAIN THAT WAY. I TOLD SHANN OF MY CONVERSATION WITH THE PRIMIN AT KENNEDY AIRPORT SHORTLY BEFORE HIS TAKE-OFF FOR OTTAWA, IN THE COURSE OF WHICH THE PRIMIN HAD BEEN MOST COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S RECORD IN WORLD AFFAIRS, ALTHOUGH WHITLAM DID DEPLORE EXCESSIVE WH SECRECY AND DISTRUST OF THE PROFESSIONALS. AT THE SAME TIME HE SEEMED TO RECOGNIZE HOW A GOOD DEAL OF THIS WAS CAUSED BY A SPATE OF LEAKS IN WASHINGTON IN THE PERIOD 1969-71, CULMINATING WITH THE PENTAGON PAPERS. ALL IN ALL, I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT WHITLAM LEFT WASHINGTON WITH A DEFINITELY FAVORABLE VIEW AND WAS CERTAINLY PLEASED WITH THE VISIT.

9. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE HAS A SHARP TONGUE NOT ALWAYS UNDER CONTROL AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE SAID ALL THAT IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO HIM IN THE UPI ARTICLE. HOWEVER, I SUSPECT IT WAS COUNTERBALANCED WITH FAVORABLE JUDGEMENTS WHICH COSTIGAN, IN HIS MISCHIEVOUS WAY, FAILED TO REPORT.

10. SHANN DEEPLY DEPLORES THIS INCIDENT WHICH HE FEARS MAY BE REPEATED. HE HAD HEARD, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT WHITLAM HAD BEEN PRETTY FREE WITH THE PRESS ON THE BEACH AT HAWAII. SHANN PROPOSES TO TAKE THIS UP WITH THE PRIMIN IF ONLY TO REMIND HIM OF THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF HIS OFF-THE-CUFF COMMENTS TO THE PRESS AND OTHERS, AT THE SAME TIME GIVING THE PRIMIN AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE ACCURACY OR OTHERWISE OF COSTIGAN'S REPORT. IN THE MEANTIME, I PROPOSE TO PLAY IT COOL AND TO BE A BIT COOL.

11. YOU MAY REMOVE THIS FROM STADIS, IF YOU DEEM IT DESIRABLE, BUT PLEASE PROTECT SHANN.
GREEN

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